

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Kindly amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-24 (Cancelled)

25. (New): A method for pasteurizing or sterilizing a product in liquid form which includes a heat sensitive substance comprising:

substantially atomizing the product in liquid form while admixing steam in a mixing chamber heated by the steam, such that microorganisms are killed, wherein

the product in liquid form has a solid content of at least 45 wt.%;

the steam is introduced into the mixing chamber at a steam pressure of between about 3 bar and 20 bar;

the residence time of the product in the mixing chamber is between about 0.2 msec and 20 msec; and

the weight ratio between the product in liquid form and steam is between about 1.6 and 1.0.

26. (New): The method of claim 25, wherein the mixing chamber has a length of between about 1 cm and 20 cm.

27. (New): The method of claim 25, wherein the steam is introduced into the mixing chamber at a steam pressure of between about 5 bar and 15 bar.

28. (New): The method of claim 25, wherein the product in liquid form has a solid content of at least 53 wt.%.

29. (New): The method of claim 25, wherein one or more products are selected from the group consisting of peptides, proteins, fats, vitamins, antioxidants, minerals, hormones, steroids, polysaccharides, vegetable oils, and sugars.

30. (New): The method of claim 25, wherein the pasteurized or sterilized product leaves the mixing chamber through an outflow opening having a size of less than 6 mm.

31. (New): The method of claim 25, wherein the pasteurized or sterilized product leaves the mixing chamber through an outflow opening having a size of less than 5 mm.

32. (New): The method of claim 25, wherein the weight ratio between the product in liquid form and steam is between about 1.75 and 7.

33. (New): The method of claim 25, wherein the temperature in the mixing chamber is between about 120°C and 150°C.

34. (New): The method of claim 25, wherein the product in liquid form is a stable emulsion.

35. (New): The method of claim 25, wherein the pasteurized or sterilized product is injected into an expansion vessel.

36. (New): The method of claim 35, wherein the expansion vessel is a flash system.

37. (New): The method of claim 25, wherein the pasteurized or sterilized product leaving the mixing chamber flows into a drying chamber in which the product is dried.

38. (New): The method of claim 37, wherein at least a part of the supplied steam, after leaving the drying chamber, is superheated and returned to the drying chamber.

39. (New): The method of claim 37, wherein the dried product contains primary powder particles having an average diameter of between about 10 μm and 60 μm .

40. (New): The method of claim 37, wherein the dried product contains an agglomerate of primary powder particles.

41. (New): The method of claim 40, wherein the product is dried using at least two nozzles, wherein outflow openings of the nozzles are arranged such that outgoing sprays comprising product and steam contact each other.

42. (New): The method of claim 41, wherein non-agglomerated primary particles are recirculated to the drying chamber via at least one of the spray nozzles.

43. (New): The method of claim 25, wherein a decimal reduction of at least 2 is reached.